

## Statement by Evan Matthews, First Executive Director of Connecticut Port Authority

October 31, 2019

The Connecticut Port Authority (CPA) was created in 2014 by the legislature to improve the economic impact of the maritime sector. It received its first appropriation of funds in 2016, and I was hired as the first executive director in September 2016. Over the last 3 years, I convened a staff of four including office manager, bookkeeper, business development and special projects manager, and a program manager through the Department of Transportation. As a quasi-public agency, the Authority is governed by 15 board of directors appointed by the Governor's office and legislative leadership.

In the first year of my oversight, the CPA Chairman and Board prioritized the launch of the Small Harbor Improvement Projects program (SHIPP) with funding from the general assembly, we funded 18 projects which ranged from boat ramp facilities in Wethersfield, and Stamford, to marina repair projects in Norwalk, Milford and Waterford, and harbor management plans in Fairfield and Essex. The CPA also took over the Federal Navigation Projects from CT DOT and completed dredging projects in Mianus River in Greenwich, the Housatonic river in Stratford and Milford, and the North cove along in the CT River in Old Saybrook. The CPA in partnership with the New Haven Port Authority funded the feasibility study for the Army Corp of Engineers to deepen the New Haven federal channel to 40 feet and began designs for improvements and upgrades to Pier 7 in New London to allow military and commercial ships to call on the port. All of these projects were managed within the board approved \$1.6 million

annual budget following appropriate review, approvals, and documentation of work performed.

In the second year, the CPA Chairman and board prioritized issuing an RFP and securing a new terminal operating concession for the State Pier Facility in New London. The Harbor Development Agreement public solicitation was issued. The lease that DOT had negotiated with the terminal operator would expire in January of 2019. Through this process, CPA executed a new terminal operating concession with Gateway Terminals, which began on May 1, 2019 and will generate \$1 million in guaranteed revenue for the CPA allowing the CPA to operate without an annual appropriation, saving the general assembly and taxpayers \$400,000 per year. As part of their proposal, Gateway brought a sublease agreement from Bay State Wind. The CPA was actively negotiating with Bay State Wind as part of scoping the specifics of the sublease, when I was placed on administrative leave.

I focused the staff and resources on programs and priorities as directed by the chairman and the board, and as advised by legal counsel. Following the recommendation of the first audit, I directed the office manager to coordinate the development and implementation of financial controls called for by the first audit. She was terminated for failure to do so.

At no time during my tenure, did I receive any performance reviews or feedback that I was mismanaging the organization or failing to follow the direction given to me. I received approval for all expenditures by either the board chair or finance committee members. At no time was I told that my actions or purchases were improper or violated a policy.

As a professional, I would have taken any corrective actions given to me. I resigned largely because I was not given any opportunity to defend myself and my actions, or to change the direction of the organization. Throughout my tenure, I have acted ethically, legally and at the scope of my authority as Executive Director as defined by the operating procedures of the CPA -approved by the legislative-appointed Board of Directors.